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**SAN JOSE, Calif.** — In a way, it is the story of the spy who came in from the fields.

The preliminary hearing in municipal court here on grand theft charges against Jerome Joseph Ducote, a figure in local right-wing political circles, should have been routine. But the tale unfolded by Ducote and other witnesses of Watergate-style burglaries against United Farm Workers president Cesar Chavez, secret meetings with wealthy but frightened growers and possible involvement of government investigators was startling.

Many questions remain to be answered as the legal proceedings continue, but so far this much is known: • Ducote was hired in 1965 by a group of growers to investigate Chavez for information that would help the growers derail his efforts to form a farm workers union.

• From late 1966 to late 1967 Ducote committed 17 burglaries aimed at getting information on Chavez and sympathizers in left-wing politics. Among the targets were two Chavez offices in Delano; the San Francisco offices of the leftist magazine, Ramparts; anti-war group offices in San Jose, Berkeley and Palo Alto; the office of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee; the Carmel vacation home of radical organizer Saul Alinsky; and the office of San Jose attorney John Thorne, whose clients included black militants Angela Davis and George Jackson.

• The information was shared not only with the growers but also, Ducote said, with Western Research, a private firm that checked the political and personal backgrounds of job applicants for a number of California companies.

• Western Research is reported to have passed on information to the FBI and other state and federal law enforcement agencies. Officials of Western Research, now reorganized as Research West, refuse to comment.

• Ducote also gave some information to a conservative California state senator with the understanding that he would forward it to the office of then-Gov. Ronald Reagan.

**DUCOTE**, A 46-year-old sheriff's deputy here from 1958 to 1963, said he and two other persons, Henry Scherling and Andrew Gulermovich, conducted the burglaries against "left-wing extremists" they felt constituted "a real threat to our form of government." Each of the three has served as head of the local Young Republicans chapter, and Ducote said that he and Scherling have been members of the John Birch Society.

Stephen D'Arrigo, whose family owns a large Salinas



**JEROME DUCOTE**  
After his arrest

Valley lettuce farm, testified last week he hired Ducote to do investigative work in the late 1960s. D'Arrigo served as the main contact between Ducote and the growers, he said.

The burglaries, which were conducted over a period of about a year, were intended to provide information that not only would be useful to the growers but also would disrupt left-wing activities. Ducote's associate, Gulermovich, who also testified last week, had the impression the burglaries had been ordered by the government. "My personal motive," he stated, "was that it was for a governmental agency and it was something they needed and it was worthwhile."

Mailing lists, financial records and other documents were the fruits of the burglaries, Ducote said. Typewriters and other valuables were never taken.

**THESE BURGLARIES**, however, are not what brought him into court. The statute of limitations on burglary is three years and the last Ducote has admitted was committed eight years ago.

Instead, he is accused of 15 counts of grand theft and 7 counts of receiving stolen property because of his failure to repay \$17,000 borrowed last summer from 14 friends, money he said he needed to pay farm workers who would disrupt Chavez's union organizing.

His associate, lettuce grower D'Arrigo, said there was no such project.

Ducote has pleaded not guilty to the grand theft charges, but he admitted the break-ins in an interview last February with Walt Kubas, a special agent for the state Justice Department. The transcript of that interview was filed after Ducote's arrest Dec. 22. Ducote, the divorced father of eight, was freed from jail Friday after bond was reduced from \$100,000 to \$20,000.

**MANY QUESTIONS** remain. It is unknown how many growers were involved, although Ducote named D'Arrigo and Delano grape grower Jack Pandol, who Ducote said provided a key

and \$1,400 to pay for the burglary of a United Farm Workers office. Likewise, it is unknown how much money the growers paid Ducote. He testified that he received \$40,000 from 1963 to 1970.

How much the government knows about Ducote's activities is also unclear. Jerry Boyes, a San Jose dance instructor who has been an FBI informant, says that the FBI received information on Ducote two years ago.

And UFW lawyer Jerry Cohen says he informed the FBI two years ago when Ducote, then using the alias "Fred Schwartz," offered to sell him documents stolen from the UFW.

Frank Perrone, FBI spokesman in San Francisco, said in an interview last week, "We were not aware of any of Mr. Ducote's activities until they were made public by the news media" recently.

"We never received the fruits of his burglaries," Perrone said. "He was not put up to any of this by the FBI. We never knowingly dealt with him." Perrone refused to comment on whether the FBI and Western Research had ever exchanged information.

Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., plans to have his House Judiciary subcommittee on constitutional rights investigate whether the FBI failed to act in the case and whether the agency received any of the documents stolen by Ducote.

**CHAVEZ**, who appeared as the first prosecution witness against Ducote Thursday, testified that the personal correspondence and union records stolen during the two burglaries at his offices in Delano were "extremely valuable."

Chavez listed 15 burglaries, robberies and bombings at UFW offices or the homes of UFW leaders during the last 10 years.

He released a copy of a telegram he sent Thursday to Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. calling for an investigation. Brown has not yet acted on the request.

What motivated Ducote will continue to be debated as the legal proceedings go on. His own lawyer termed Ducote a man who "was solicited because of his background in law enforcement to investigate certain things that were considered a threat to the American way of life."

But prosecutor Kenneth Robinson retorted that Ducote himself "threatened the American way of life. If your ideals went against Mr. Ducote's, Mr. Ducote made the decision, 'you're a threat to the American way of life.'"

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